

Figure 2 illustrates that wafer carrier 130 misaligns wafer 135 from the center of polishing pad 140. These features were illustrated in Figure 2 as of the original filing date and no new matter has been added.

Applicant respectfully traverses the §112 (first paragraph) rejection of the claims for the following reasons. With respect to the issue of determining whether a wafer is being polished in a center-offset manner, reference is made to page 3, lines 9-18 of the Specification. Where the wafer exhibits either a center-fast condition or a center-slow condition, a center-offset condition of the wafer is indicated. A center-fast condition indicates that the center of the wafer is being polished at a higher rate than the outer regions of the wafer. A center-slow condition, on the other hand, indicates that the center of the wafer is being polished at a lower rate relative to the outer regions of the wafer (page 3, lines 10-14). Applicant teaches that a measurement across the thickness of the wafer using a device such as a pair of calipers will provide an indication of the amount of wear on the center portion versus the outer portions of the wafer (page 7, lines 9-13).

The difference in thickness at the center of the wafer compared with a center-fast or center-slow polished wafer, as discussed above, can be determined with a pair of calipers. The difference in thickness between the two conditions is attributable to non-uniform polishing conditions and to an increase in polishing rates caused by increased pressure, increased slurry or increased heat (page 3, lines 14-18). Applicant contends that based on the current specification, one skilled in the art can ascertain the polishing condition of the wafer by viewing the relative wear thickness during polishing and by using a pair of calipers to actually measure the difference.

A closer review of Figure 2 and page 8 (line 3) of the specification illustrates that wafer carrier 135 is misaligned (positioned closer to the inside edge of polishing pad 140). However, wafer 130 can also be moved with carrier 135 towards edge 230, depending on the center-offset condition of the wafer and the thickness of the condition pad (from edge 230 back towards the center of table 210) (page 9, lines 16-21). Applicant contends that based on the current specification, one skilled in the art can ascertain the manner of misaligning the wafer and wafer carrier with respect to the polishing pad in order to correct for the center-offset condition being exhibited by the wafer during polishing.

In view of the above remarks, Applicant believes that each of the §112 rejections has been overcome and the application is in condition for allowance. Should there be any remaining

issues that could be readily addressed over the telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at (651) 686-6633.

Respectfully submitted,

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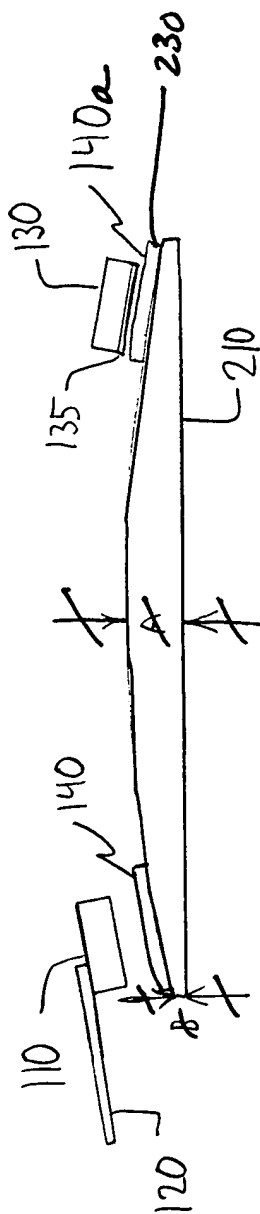


Fig 2